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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8738  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1088  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 8089  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 6287  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4549  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2308  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 4517  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3621  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 8714  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 6130  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0760  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2965  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000921

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2018  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: SUICIDE BOMBING KILLS ABOUT 27,  
INCLUDING RETIRED WAR HERO, WOUNDS 90

Classified By: DCM JAMES R. MOORE, FOR REASONS: 1.4(b,d).

11. (C) An apparent suicide attack took the lives of at least 27 people and wounded about 90 in government-controlled territory in northern Sri Lanka. Reports state that a suicide bomber dressed in business attire walked into an office of the main opposition United National Party (UNP) in Anuradhapura during the ceremony for its opening and detonated a device concealed under his clothing. The blast killed its intended target, Major General Janaka Perera (retired), his wife, as well as the UNP organizer for Anuradhapura district, Dr. Raja Johnpulle, and at least twenty bystanders. Embassy has been unable to confirm reports that several of the casualties were from General Perera's immediate family. Many of the wounded were reportedly in critical condition. No one claimed credit for the bombing, but most observers concurred with the assessment of Sri Lankan military spokesmen, who blamed the incident on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

12. (C) However, UNP General Secretary Tissa Attanayake issued a statement saying that the Sri Lankan government must share the blame for this death, since senior security officials had denied personal security protection for Perera despite repeated requests based on the threat against him. Other UNP sources told Embassy that they were still not sure of the authorship of the attack. While noting the "Tamil Tigers" were the most obvious suspects, they pointed out that the attack occurred in the middle of a government high-security zone in a city with numerous military installations. The UNP cited other organizations who could have been responsible, including the paramilitary TMVP, which broke away from the Tamil Tigers in 2004 and now works with the government.

13. (U) General Perera was a hero of several campaigns against the Tamil Tigers in the mid-1990s, including the government's recapture of Jaffna. After his retirement, he served as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Australia and to Indonesia. Recently, General Perera joined the opposition UNP and campaigned as its lead candidate in the August 2008 elections for the of North Central Provincial Council, which includes Anuradhapura, drawing more votes than any other candidate.

¶4. (SBU) Johnpulle had served as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the former Soviet Union in the late 1970s. In August his personal residence was burned down by a mob led by supporters of the ruling Sri Lankan Freedom Party days before the Provincial Council election. Johnpulle had recently filed a \$1m million fundamental rights suit against the security forces for failure to provide adequate protection. Six of the arson suspects in the case had surrendered to police on October 5.

¶5. (U) Embassy Colombo issued a statement condemning this terrorist attack in the strongest terms:

(Begin text)

UNITED STATES STRONGLY CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACK IN ANURADHAPURA

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack on October 6 in Anuradhapura that claimed the lives of Major General (retired) Janaka Perera and Dr. Raja Johnpulle and their spouses. Also killed in this heinous suicide bombing, which occurred during the ceremonial opening of the office of the North Central Province opposition leader, were several members of the provincial council and numerous other innocent bystanders. We express our deepest sympathies to the families of the victims and the people of Sri Lanka.

COLOMBO 00000921 002 OF 002

Major General Perera led a distinguished career in the armed forces of Sri Lanka and subsequently as a diplomat in Australia and Indonesia. Dr. Johnpulle, a medical practitioner and the district manager of the United National Party for Anuradhapura, served his country as a diplomat in the former Soviet Union.

The United States denounces this reprehensible attack on civilians. Its perpetrators have advanced no cause other than to bring further suffering to the people of Sri Lanka. Only a political solution, not further violence, can provide a way forward to ending the country's deadly conflict. (End text)

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Embassy believes that the apparent method employed - by suicide bomber - points in the direction of the Tamil Tigers as the most probable authors of this terrorist attack. However, there are other possibilities we are not able to exclude at this point. As in the case of most such politically motivated killings in Sri Lanka, it is not likely that an investigation will lead to any certainty about who committed this deed.

BLAKE